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SACRED DANCE GUILD. NEWSLETTER.

SUMMER, 1970

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FOLLOWUP ON JUNE INSTITUTE

The June Institute at Murray Grove, N.J. was a success in many ways. First, we took the risk of extending the time of the workshop, which meant increased cost for us all, yet we were almost filled to capacity. Secondly, we introduced separate discussions on music, yoga, etc., in relation to dance. Finally, our Thursday night discussion was opened by three excellent presentations by the Sacred Dance Guild of Miami, directed by Diana Avery. Then there was a real time of questions, sharing and suggestions about the ways that many are using dance for communication. The evening was concluded with guitarist Jess Gordon of Chappaqua, N.Y., leading us all in songs which brought us to a high point as one spiritual fellowship.

The evaluations emphasize the point which President Virginia Lucke included in her final remarks on Friday, i.e., when a person comes expecting, with anticipation, that person will find something of value. It may or may not be new steps, new ideas, rhythms or whatever, but it may well be the spiritual bond of fellowship between like-minded people devoted to a particular art as a means of creative expression. In the words of several persons on the evaluation sheets, "it was all the beautiful people at the workshop" that made the event worthwhile. This can happen for the beginner or the advanced dancer, as well as to "interested observers", if all are committed to the cause of dance as a means of religious expression.

We discovered through Charles Creegan and Robert Yohn that sensitive interpretations, natural movements, and the dynamics of different rhythms all make up dance, and that dance, religion and life are one. From the simple forms of expression to the more difficult and dynamic, all are an expression of one's self and of one's faith.

The brief meditations taken from contemporary sources were designed to have all of us think about ourselves, that in touching one another, in reaching out, in feeling for and exploring with one another, we come to know each other and ourselves in a spirit of love. Herein we find the God-within-us who constantly gives to us the ability to express beauty, love and truth.

In writing this report, the Program Chairman wishes to thank all those who gave support and cooperation for making the workshop a success. A word of deep appreciation to Bob Yohn and Pat Sonen who served on the Program Committee; and to Bob, who served as one of our instructors and gave of himself and his ideas beyond the ordinary time required for instructing a class -- THANKS!

The Program Chairman is always open to suggestions for future workshops, and suggests that all try to hold smaller local workshops and feel free to call upon us for suggestions; many members of the Guild are more than willing to assist in any way. Then please let us know what you do by sending a report to the Program Chairman.

-Daren L. Miller, Program Chairman

PLEASE NOTE: This special summer mini-edition of the S.D.G. Newsletter contains the "News of Sacred Dance Items" which could not be included in the Spring issue, and also provides members with the three issues per year included in your membership fee. The regular Fall issue will go out on schedule.

NEWS

OF SACRED DANCE (listed alphabetically by states)

ARIZONA

CAROLYN HASTINGS, director of the Sacred Dance Choir of Phoenix's First Congregational Church writes that the group, which has usually worked with music, danced on Christmas Eve to the scripture narrative of the nativity, interspersed with anthems by the chancel choir. Carolyn writes, "The final anthem at the midnight hour was a joyous number, "Christians, Awake", and we wanted to involve the congregation. In the song there was a line, "Rise to adore", so the dancers went into the congregation and gave their hands to a few, and soon everyone had risen. It was a beautiful way to bring in the Christmas morning." The group also presented a dance version of Oscar Wilde's "The Selfish Giant" during Lent.

CALIFORNIA

DOUG ADAMS of San Mateo has completed his master's thesis on "Congregational Dancing in Christian Worship" at Pacific School of Religion. The thesis spells out numerous principles and practices for congregational participation in movement. To ether with JOHN BURKE, Doug choreographed and presented Felciano's "Pentecost" at the First Congregational Church of Berkeley. He describes Felciano's work as "a piece of alleatoric music which carries out the Pentecost theme of diversity of individuals possible within the community."

MARGARET TAYLOR CHANLEY has given her collection of books and pamphlets on sacred dance to Pacific School of Religion library which is developing an extensive collection on the subject.

MARGIT HERRLES, a student of MARY IGMAN, led classes in sacred dance for students from the cluster of seminaries in Berkeley, and will offer continuing classes in the fall.

A group directed by ELYSE ROBERT of Pacific Palisades presented a program entitled "Symbolic Dance of East and West" in Los Angeles recently.

A group called the Soul Searchers, THELMA BATCHELOR, director, danced "One God" and "Exodus" this past spring.

CONNECTICUT

The Dancers of Faith, LOUISE MATTLAGE, director, danced recently at the Inter-church Center in New York City, and presented a series of concerts in the New England area. Their director reports giving lecture-demonstrations in Florida at a high school, at the University of Hawaii under the co-sponsorship of the Division of Continuing Education and Community Service, the University Dance Theater, and the East-West Center, and at the Church College in Laie, Oahu. In Honolulu she taught a group of young boys at the Iolani Episcopal School.

FLORIDA

The Sacred Dance Guild of Miami, DIANA AVERY, director, presented "Singing and Dancing for God" as part of the adult education program of St. Louis R.C. Church; "Lobos", "The Lord's Prayer" and "Simple Gifts" were performed to demonstrate how prayer and scripture are interpreted and brought to life through the beauty of dance. In February "Jerusalem of Gold", dealing with the six-day war in Israel, was pre-

sented at the ancient Spanish monastery in which the group performs each year. Also included were "Minister of War", "I Saw the Vision of Armies" and "Casida of the Lament", all concerned with the futility of war and sung by Joan Baez. In similar vein the group danced in a worship service at First Unitarian Church devoted to showing the misery of war and extolling the joys of peace. A dance-procession to the words of "Battle Hymn of the Republic" led into Henry Treece's "he Murdered the Minutes", "Three Visions of War" (described above), and closed with Virgil Thompson's "Wide, Wide World". In April two numbers choreographed specifically for the Passover service, "Veulai" ("perhaps") and "A Din Toire Mit Gott" ("a plea to God") were danced at Temple Judea and sung by the temple's cantor, RITA SHORE.

KATHLEEN POWELL, director of the Christ Lutheran Chancel Dance Group reports the group presented several programs in local churches in connection with youth workshops and participated in other special programs given to raise funds for various charities in Fort Myers and Cape Coral. They also provided the nucleus for a program sponsored by the Edison Players of Fort Myers and presented at Edison Junior College. Entitled "Worship in Music and Dance", the program also involved dancers who represented Jewish and American Indian dance and music traditions in worship.

HAWAII

MARGARET TAYLOR CHANEY reports being as actively involved in sacred dance as ever, having worked with a gathering of United Church of Christ women from all the islands in Honolulu last winter. "Shalom", which she had used as a circle-dance, was transformed into "Aloha" and became a greeting dance. She also led a youth rally of fifty high-schoolers, mostly boys, in a session which included the group designs of the 5-Fold Amen and symbolic gestures for a spoken "Lord's Prayer". The group, says Margaret, was shy but entered in, and expressed their enthusiasm. Together with her husband, Margaret led a devotional service as part of a union Lenten series, and included simple symbolic gestures designed to involve the congregation. Worshippers lifted their arms in praise on the doxology, joined hands on "Blest Be the Tie that Binds"; Margaret writes, "The aisles were filled and they were truly a gathered group; following this we had everyone participate in a mutual peace benediction, moving informally in sharing this by enfolding of hands." In August Margaret will be one of the leaders for the Choristers Guild Seminar in Honolulu.

MAINE

The Sacred Dance Group of Camden, MRS. DONALD HENDELSON, director, presented a Lenten service which included "O Divine Redeemer!", "Joy Is Like the Rain", "Come Down, Lord", and others.

JUDITH BOOTHBY of Winthrop writes of working with the entire church school to present dances during worship at both Christmas and Easter. Taped music (recorders and children's voices) was produced by church members first, then used for rehearsals and performances. Judith writes, "The children had been studying Christian symbolism and made large medallions depicting their own favorite to wear as part of their costume over black turtleneck jerseys. The girls wore black tights, the boys black dungarees. For the Easter service the children wore the same outfits with flower medallions they had made."

MASSACHUSETTS

JEANNE SAUNDERS of Weston danced at a chapel service of First Parish Guild (Unitarian prior to a program on environmental improvement. Titled "The Earth Is the Lord's", the service included dance to readings spoken by the dancer, a portion of the "Appalachian Spring" music, followed by dance to scripture.

CAROL LAYLE's Motion Choir of First Parish Church, Dorchester, presented two new works in their own church on Youth Sunday and for the annual meeting of the Dance Teachers Club of Boston held at the Hotel Somerset. One of these, "Psalm 121", is the favorite psalm of Lillafrances Viles, former D.T.C. president who was being honored at the meeting. The Motion Choir had been engaged by the Program Committee as a surprise to her; Carol writes: "It was the first time that most of the club members had ever seen sacred dance, and there were many favorable comments." The other work, "Exodus", features an interesting use of stoles: in the first section, "Out of Bondage", they are used to cover the head until the end, signifying liberation; they then hang loosely from the shoulders and are used to cover the face during the second part "The Pursuit", to convey frustration and fear; in the final section, "Song of Praise" they are used like scarlands and finally wrapped casually at the neckline to indicate joy and confidence.

JOAN SPARROW of Concord led weekly workshops during April and May at the First Universalist Parish of Eastham. Joan danced during the morning worship at First Parish in Norwell, presenting four dances: (1) dance to Robert Frost's poem "Forgive, O Lord my little jokes on thee, and I'll forgive thy great big one on me"; (2) Psalm 8; (3) dance which she describes as "an ecological approach to spring" to music of Vi-valdi and Vaughan Williams; (4) another Frost poem, "Nature within her inmost self divides to trouble men with having to take sides". Joan also choreographed and danced, together with three others, a work based on Anne Morrow Lindbergh's "Gift from the Sea", using Debussy's "La Mer" as music, for the church and church school of First Parish, Barnstable.

At an outdoor worship service of First Parish Unitarian Church, Framingham, JUDITH STANES' First Parish Dance Group presented "Handel in Three Parts" (harpsichord and recorder). She reports using twelve young teenagers from a nearby ballet studio and says, "Their teacher wanted them to have the experience of moving in the modern dance idiom, so my choreography emphasizes lots of torso movements, breathing, movements starting from 'within', relaxation, swings and walks with fast changes of direction." Judith presented a solo work at Christmastime using Villa Lobos' "Bachianas Brasileiras #5", wearing a brilliant red gown with long white chiffon scarf.

JEAN KINGTON, director of the Sacred Dance Choir of Needham Congregational Church reports the group danced "All Things Bright and Beautiful" and passes along an interesting means of involving others in group movement. She writes, "The dancers dance the selection once, then one member recites the hymn a line at a time, while each member teaches the movement to a group of children; then they dance the whole number through in the altar area and the aisles, the Junior Choir providing music."

The Sacred Dance Choir of United Parish (Winchendon), CAYE HIZHIR, director, danced in their own church at a youth meeting, presenting "Turn, Turn, Turn", "Both Sides Now", "Blessed" and "Sounds of Silence". At the Hampshire Country School in Rindge, N.H. the group danced "The Lord's Prayer" "Psalm 23" and "Lord of the Dance".

MICHIGAN

Dancers from Grand Valley State College (3 men, 11 women) danced Flor Peeters' "Magnificat" in a Baptist Church in Grand Rapids. The spacious chancel offered a 12 x 20 foot area with four marble steps the full 20-foot length. Music was provided by a 60-voice choir and concert band.

VERGILIA LUCKE of Grand Rapids gave lectures at Grand Valley College and Calvin College on the history of modern dance, stressing the part religious dance has played

in the over-all picture. Students at Calvin College made banners, studied music, linear and special arts, wrote haiku poems, read the books A Time To Dance and Lord of the Dance; with Virginia they improvised movements to some of the haiku poems and the song "Lord of the Dance". Many will go out to teach in Christian Reformed schools and are interested in new forms of worship.

The Junior Rhythmic Choir of East Congregational Church, Grand Rapids, danced "Mayim" as part of a Children's Day service. In the same church the Pilgrim Choir and Pilgrim Fellowship presented the musical revue For Heaven's Sake, with choreography by ROSEMARY NADOLSKY.

MINNESOTA

S.D.C. member VIRGINIA HUFFINE is breaking new ground in the Rochester area. She danced to a reading of "A Vernal Creed" in Easter Sunday services at the Unitarian-Universalist Church and conducted a May lecture-demonstration, workshop and performance rolled into one at the same church. Open to the public and publicized as ecumenical, the workshop was the subject of an impressive followup story in the local newspaper. One unusual item included in the performance portion of the day was "Hymn to the Sun", an interpretation of an Inca Indian dance, music by Andre Sausse.

Three dancers from Christ United Methodist Church, Rochester, were requested to dance their interpretation of I Corinthians 13 at an encounter-type worship service at their church. The result: a four-minute dance attempt to convey both love and the complexity of interpersonal relationships, presented without music. Dancers were MARILYN MESS, MARY BECKENBAUGH and DCNA ROBINSON.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Motion Choir of Marlborough Federated Church, PRISCILLA RICHARDSON, director, participated throughout the year in services connected with the special days of the church year. "Were You There?" was used on Good Friday, a recessional with palms on Palm Sunday, and "Easter Carol" for Easter Sunday.

The Hopkinton Sacred Dance Choir under the direction of MRS. ANTHONY WALKER, presented a collection of dances as part of a Sunday evening service at the First Baptist Church of Haverhill, Massachusetts. Included were "Go Tell Everyone", "Lord of the Dance" and "Psalm 23".

NEW YORK

According to a New York Times report of July 27 "an ancient Biblical story about the generation gap was translated into contemporary speech and modern dance" at the Hanson Place Central Methodist Church in Brooklyn. The story of David and Absalom, the work was presented by a dance class sponsored jointly by the church and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and taught by FRED BENJAMIN of the cast of the Broadway show "Promises, Promises"; it was choreographed by Mr. Benjamin and danced to the accompaniment of bongos.

The WESLEYAN DANCERS of Amityville, BETTY DEAN HYDON, director, danced their "Celebration of the Christ Mass" (music of Praetorius with Luther's Christmas sermons) in Northport, Hoppage and Amityville. "The Passion", a medieval Lenten work, was danced in West Hampton Beach, East Williston, Hicksville, Stoneybrook, the Lutheran Elementary School of Seaford, and Albertson. "Reconciliation In A Broken World", entirely contemporary music and readings, was presented in Sea Cliff, Glen Cove, Babylon, Rockville Center and Yonkers. The group's director taught a daily work-

shop in sacred dance during August at the 54th annual session of the Northern New England School of Religious Education at Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire.

The WESLEYAN DANCERS of Newburgh, JUDITH BENNETT, director, presented a new work at the Convent of Saint Helena as part of a religious arts festival, and again at the S.D.G. Mid-Winter Workshop in New City. Dealing with the theme "Reconciliation In A Broken World", the work used music by Penderecki, Pfeiffer and the Pink Floyd and was titled Options, with the three parts of the dance sub-titled "you get yours and I'll get mine", "self-destruct" and "give a damn". Late spring performances included "God's Trombones" and "The Passion", and a highly successful experimental venture into children's dance, with public school performances of "The Ugly Duckling". The group's director taught a course in sacred dance at an annual ecumenical music conference sponsored jointly by the Massachusetts chapter of the American Guild of Organists and the Craigville Conference Center in Craigville, Massachusetts.

The Cornwall Children's Dance Theater, JUDITH BENNETT, director, joined junior choirs of Westchester County in an ecumenical Festival of the Faiths at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Mt. Kisco. Assigned to the portion of the festival devoted to music of the Eastern church, the group danced the traditional Dance of Isaiah from the Greek Orthodox wedding ceremony, accompanied by massed choirs and a cantor.

The Huntington Dancers of Faith, directed by VIRA KLAWE, participated in a "Festival of the Arts in Religion" at the Congregational Church of Huntington. Included were "An Offering of Light" and "Motherhood" to music by Villa Lobos.

A newly-formed group of high school girls at First Congregational Church, Bay Shore, danced in special services this past year; director is ELIZABETH WOODBRIDGE.

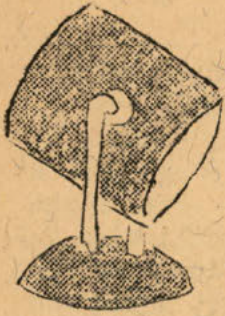
DAREN MILLER of Stony Point reports teaching sacred dance sessions for a youth convention of the American Lutheran Church, N.J. Synod, in Asbury Park, N.J.; a course in "Drama and Dance in Christian Education" for the Northern N.J. Conference of the Methodist Church; and directing a production of the musical A Man Dies at the U.M. Church of Pearl River, N.Y. The musical, first produced in England, puts the Holy Week narrative in modern speech and dress.

VERMONT

The Faith Interpretive Choir of the North Springfield Baptist Church, directed by JEAN WILLARD, presented "To Us A Child Is Born", an hour-long pageant which, in the director's words, "begins with the creation of man, his rebellion and the birth of Christ as God's attempt to reconcile man to himself, ending with the congregation coming forward to offer material gifts and a re-dedication of self to God." Extensive use of colored lighting made by men of the church enhanced dramatic aspects. Six boys participated in the pageant, three are remaining with the group to prepare "Go Down, Moses" and "Who Will Answer?".

WASHINGTON

The Sacred Dance Group of Spokane, directed by THERESE ELLIOTT, presented several programs for churches and lodges in their area.



Spotlight

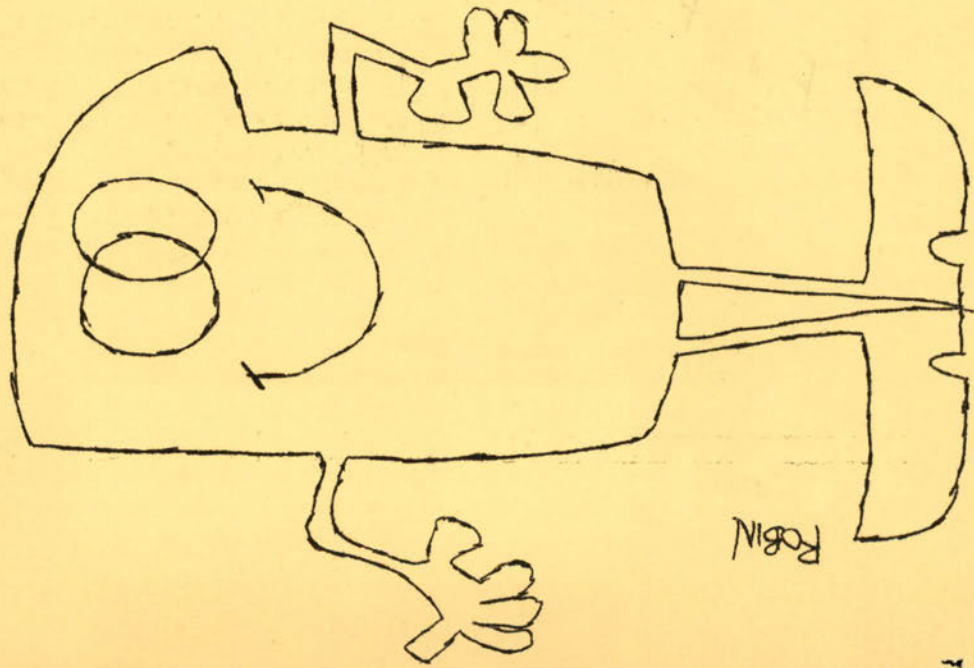
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NEW MEMBERS

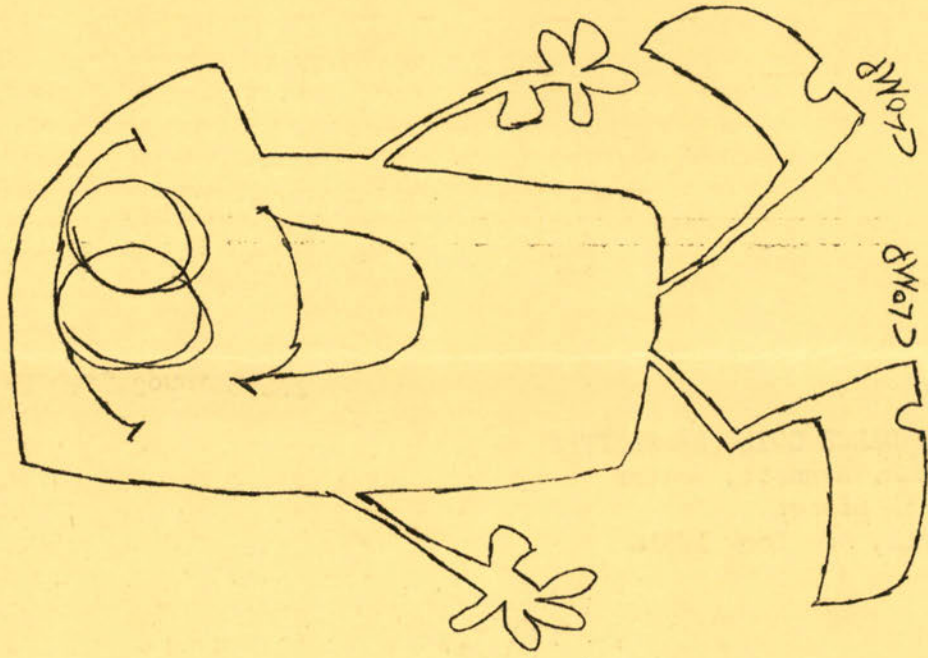
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WARMEST THANKS to artist ROBERT JENSEN for sharing with us the delightful cartoon on the following page. Mr. Jensen's work has been used by no less than fourteen denominations; his own background is Christian Reformed. He reports that young people desiring a happy, joyful contemporary church "dig" cartoons as a contemporary form of communication. Readers who also "dig" cartoons will look forward to the publication this fall of Church Idbits, a booklet-sized collection of Mr. Jensen's work to be published by Zondervan Press.

I'm so joyous
about being a
Christian.....



I could
DANCE!



But then I
would be kicked
out of the church!

